

**AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE  
OF THE COMMISSION ON AGING**

Date: February 14, 2023  
9:30am-11:30 am

“Smart Home – Smarter Care: A Conversation about the Technology Forum”

**In Attendance:** Wayne Berman (co-chair), Betsy Carrier (co-chair), Marsha Weber, Laurie Pross, Joyce Dubow, Sibio Ncube, Mona Grieser, Mary Sweeney, David Engel, Barbara Selter, Bob Levey

**Staff:** Pazit Aviv, MC AAA

**Guests:** Marcia Pruzan, Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging; Austin Heyman, Chuck Short (MCPS Senior Fellow), Kathleen McGuiness (Director of Community Relations, Smith-Life Homecare)

**Opening Remarks from the Co-Chairs:** Wayne welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda for today’s meeting that featured a presentation by Kathleen McGuiness (Director of Community Relations, Smith-Life Homecare) and a discussion on the upcoming CoA Forum, title “Smart Homes-Smarter Care: The Role of Technology to Support Aging in Place”.

**Approval of the Minutes:** The minutes of the January 10, 2023, meeting were reviewed and approved.

**PRESENTATION:**

Kathleen McGuiness presented the story of how she used technology to assist in caring for her aged parents as well as her husband who had dementia. She stated that she used five essential family caregiving products:

- CaringBridge.org: A website for community and family support as well as respite care.
- Smart Soles: A GPS Tracker for individuals who wander.
- Apple Watch with GPS.
- Alexa / Google Assistant: For remote communications, caregiving, and fun.
- The Internet

Much of Kathleen’s presentation focused on how she used each of these technologies and services to help her in her role as caregiver, given the different circumstances she had to deal with between her parents and her husband. She tailored all these technologies to suit her varying needs. She also stated that she learned a lot from YouTube videos and Wikiphow on how to use the medical technology and to troubleshoot technologies that were not working well. A very engaging question and answer session followed Kathleen’s presentation. Her presentation “**Care Giving and Tech 101**” is attached for further information.

**DISCUSSION ON THE PUBLIC FORUM**

Following Kathleen McGuinness' presentation, Wayne reviewed progress made to date on the CoA's upcoming public Forum: Smart Homes-Smarter Care: Technology that Supports Aging in Place. He thanked the working group that has been formed to organize the forum. The members include Betsy Carrier, Sibio Ncube, Barbara Selter, David Engel, Mary Sweeney, and Mona Greiser. He reviewed the particulars of the Forum as follows:

DATE / TIME: Thursday, May 4, 2023; 9:30 am to 2:30 pm

TITLE: Smart Homes-Smarter Care: Technology that Supports Aging in Place

GOALS:

- To understand the current technology trends, opportunities, and challenges that help older adults remain independent, connected, and safe in their homes.
- To identify how technology can support the diverse older adult communities across income levels, now and in the future.
- To encourage ways that the public and private sectors can work together in Montgomery County to support smarter homes for older adults and their caregivers.

AUDIENCE:

- Seniors who are or who want to age in place,
- Caregivers / care managers who provide services to support in-home care,
- County officials and staff (including HOC),
- Hospital discharge planners' staff,
- Senior living specialists (e.g. life care planners, gerontologists, Home for Mom)
- Others: IT professionals, ATT / Verizon, Medstar / Adventist / Hopkins, Interfaith Advisory Group for Montgomery County and seniors and other low-income peoples

Wayne also reviewed the draft agenda as follows:

AGENDA

- Introductory Remarks –
- Keynote Address (locally and nationally)
  - o Make the case for smarter homes.
  - o Trends that are driving greater technology usage
  - o Digital Health Equity

MORNING PANEL speakers with moderator: Examples of technologies in use for activities of daily living and in-home care Keeping in mind the following

- o Safety
- o Health and Wellness
- o Communications
- o Caregiver / providers in-Home Care speaker
- o Learning / Education
- o Digital Equity

- Morning Wrap-up (mention exhibitors)

LUNCH, EXHIBIT HALL, AND POSSIBLE POSTER SESSION

COMMUNITY FOR A LIFETIME RECGNITION AWARD PRESENTATION

AFTERNOON PANEL

- Introduction to afternoon Program (include Access HEARS)
- Moving Forward in Montgomery County (panel and discussion)
  - o Hospital Discharge speaker

- o Senior Planet and Education
- o Smart Home automation
- o Intergenerational Program to help educate older adults
- Wrap Up – What Was Heard on How to Move Forward (for Montgomery County) Summarize Forum and Frame an Action Agenda; How to get started.

Following Wayne’s presentation, he opened up the floor to questions and comments on the Forum and its progress. The AIC Committee was very supportive and enthusiastic about the Forum and its topic. Several suggestions were offered:

- It would be good to include the challenges of Telemedicine,
- Representatives from the Villages should attend,
- Incorporate the need for one-on-one support to help educate older adults on technology and get them started. A Intergenerational program with high school students would be beneficial in this regard.
- Advocated for some kind of train-the-trainer program,
- It is important to talk about “what happens after the Forum and who will assist in advancing the ideas coming from the forum. This might include the JCA, JSSA, the Recreation Department, Libraries, MCPS the Gilcrest Center, and the County Council.
- Must acknowledge the issue of privacy in the Forum,
- It will be useful to have the support of the JCA Interages Program,
- Need to address the costs and use of high tech and low-tech devices,
- It is important to help people access technology, not just hand out devices and walk away,
- Need to advocate for more investment to advance these concepts,
- Need some examples of Villages who help with technology,
- Look into have a representative from Oasis attend the forum,
- This Forum should not be a “One and Done” thing. The themes and outcomes need to continue and be part of advocacy, policy, and investment,
- Look into philanthropic opportunities to continue work, especially for intergenerational programs.

A lot of good discussion occurred about the Forum with the attendees reiterating their enthusiastic support for it. Lot of good ideas were stated.

**UPCOMING MEETING:** The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 14th at 9:30 am. The focus of this business meeting will be an update of the Village program and a review of the results of the “hub and spoke” survey. .

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** 11:40 am